

Southwest Rice Mills, Crowley, LA – There has been an issue that has come up that I think you should be aware of. Other issues and work aside, this is about the use of water for farmers and the difficulties or challenges it is presenting for the cleanup of the oil. Rice farmers just planted, they need water now. Bayous Blanc and Plaquemine are sources of that water. As farmers pull water from the bayou there are two negative results: One is that they draw water from an area with oil now present and that could pull water from onto their fields. Two is that the pumping generates a flow and causes the oil to escape the current containment. Pumping in either area does make extra steps and labor to cleanup the oil.

In addition to the health safety of the residents who live on the Bayou, the removal of the free floating oil in the Bayou so that the farmers can use that water is top priority. We have been working with the Parish as well as some of the farmers to try to get to a solution. The farmers went to the Governor, and have been very vocal in their concerns. LDEQ's conversation with the Governor resulted in the declaration from the Governor to let the farmers pump. LDEQ directed the RP's contractor to take the necessary steps to deal with that decision. The RP has not been involved in that discussion or that decision. Nor was I in on the discussion with the Governor or his directive.

I don't necessarily disagree with the decision to pump. It does need more resources but if properly deployed, the impact on the fields may not be that dramatic. And we know that pumping is going on now.

This could be the end of the RP lead. And we are prepared to take it over. A Task Order has already been given to our ERRS contractor. I wouldn't want to try to reverse the Governor's decision. I would continue with basically what the LDEQ directed the RP's contractor to do.